

National Commitments to SDG Transformation: 2024 Update

1. Name of country: **Greece**
2. Please provide a **short update on the steps taken, progress made and/or lessons learned in implementing each of the National Commitments to SDG Transformation** announced by your country in conjunction with the 2023 SDG Summit:¹

Name of Commitment: “Smart, Resilient and Climate Neutral Cities” Initiative of the Government of Greece - Promoting sustainable development, resilience, and climate neutrality in Greek Cities by 2030 (and in the longer run by 2050)	Contact person: Kalliopi Papadaki (Ms), Advisor, General Secretariat of Spatial Planning and Urban Environment of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy Email: arc.kalliopi@gmail.com
Brief description of steps taken on implementation, progress made and/or lessons learned:	
<p>The Hellenic Government is committed to upgrading and improving urban areas in Greece so that they can effectively respond to the current and emerging challenges of addressing climate change impacts, safeguarding social cohesion, and ensuring economic growth and prosperity, in an inclusive and sustainable way, leaving no one behind.</p> <p>Towards localizing the SDGs at the urban context and promoting implementation of SDG 11 targets through their strong interlinkages with other SDGs, Greece (General Secretariat of Spatial Planning and Urban Environment of the Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy) is promoting a series of initiatives for achieving “Smart, Resilient and Climate Neutral Cities by 2030” in a wide array of sectors and in full concert with local governments.</p> <p>The policy innovations promoted are fully in line and correspond to the priority areas of the new European Urban Agenda (i.e. air quality, circular economy, climate adaptation, cultural heritage, digital transition, energy transition, housing, inclusion, innovative and responsible public procurement, jobs and skills, sustainable use of land and nature-based solutions, urban mobility, urban poverty and security), focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increasing resilience,• Promoting climate neutrality,• Promoting urban accessibility,• Improving walkability and biking,• Buildings’ management and renovation (e.g. towards energy efficiency improvement and circularity),	

¹ All submitted commitments are available at <https://sdgs.un.org/SDGSummitActions/National>

- Regeneration of open urban spaces and increase of urban green areas (through ‘green ways’ and ‘blue ways’),
- Promotion of new technologies and digital transformation.

The overall vision of the Greek Government translates into a series of dedicated thematic Strategies for all the above focus areas, providing overall strategic targets, objectives, and milestones.

Since September 2023 when the Initiative was submitted at the UN SDG Summit as a National Commitment, the Hellenic Ministry of Energy has elaborated the thematic **Strategy on Walkability** which has already gone through a public consultation process involving key local actors and stakeholders, and will very soon be legally adopted/enacted.

Two more strategies were established by law 5106/2024 and are ongoing: **Strategy for Housing Stock Management** and **Strategy for Urban Resilience**.

In addition, Greece has demonstrated remarkable achievements in the EU Mission for climate neutral cities, securing four EU Mission Labels for Kozani, Thessaloniki, Kalamata and Ioannina. These awards reflect the successful submissions of Climate City Contracts (CCC), presenting strong action plans aimed at achieving climate neutrality by 2030. With these four Labels, Greece ranks third among all EU member states in terms of recognized cities, further strengthening its commitment to climate leadership. In addition, all six Greek cities of the Mission—including Athens and Trikala—are actively participating as pilot cities, each implementing pioneering projects adapted to urban climate neutrality. Athens and Trikala are currently progressing in their efforts to secure their own EU shipping labels, with Athens planning to submit its CCC in September 2024 and Trikala's CCC currently under review by the European Commission.

The initiatives are underpinned by effective evaluation and monitoring, conducted through rigorous reviews by the European Commission and ongoing support from the NetZeroCities Mission platform, ensuring climate targets are met. Looking to the future, cities are poised to improve and expand their projects to address evolving urban and climate challenges. This proactive approach is supported by comprehensive stakeholder engagement, with local governments, the private sector and academia co-leading the projects. Financial sustainability is achieved through the strategic use of national and EU funds, which helps mitigate financial challenges and ensures the continuation of these climate initiatives. Communication and transparency are a priority, with regular updates and reports keeping stakeholders well informed and engaged. These efforts not only underline Greece's commitment to urban climate resilience but also its important role in shaping future urban planning and policy-making in the wider EU context.

- 3 If your government is presenting a Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) at the 2024 HLPF, **how have your announced national commitments been incorporated or otherwise contributed to your country's national review processes?**

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<p>Name of Commitment: “GR-eco Islands” Initiative – Promoting sustainable development, green economy, energy autonomy and digital innovation in the Greek Islands by 2030</p>	<p>Contact person: Ioulia Drouga (Ms), Advisor, General Secretariat of Natural Environment and Water, Hellenic Ministry of Environment and Energy Email: i.drouga@prv.ypeka.gr Primary contact.</p>
<p>Brief description of steps taken on implementation, progress made and/or lessons learned:</p> <p>The “GR-eco Islands” Initiative aims at promoting sustainable development, green economy, energy autonomy, decarbonization and digital innovation in the Greek Islands by 2030. It constitutes an innovative policy approach that can inspire and instigate change being duplicated in related contexts across the world, and certainly in SIDS.</p> <p>To address the challenges that are <i>inter alia</i> closely linked to unsustainable tourism patterns, there is an urgent need for a paradigm shift, at the local level, in energy consumption, energy production and mobility patterns, towards a more holistic approach for sustainable tourism as well as climate neutrality and resilience, in the Greek islands. Moreover, there is a need to urgently promote radically innovative approaches to water and waste management, turning islands into show cases and living labs of circular economy.</p> <p>The “GR-eco Islands” Initiative aims to support Greece’s contribution to overall EU efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 55% by 2030. Related interventions will be funded (among other sources) from the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF) with more than EUR 150 mil already secured.</p> <p>The vision translates into a series of ambitions that are distinguished in 8 focus areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate neutrality and adaptation to climate change impacts, • energy transition, • sustainable resource management, • environmental protection, • entrepreneurship and innovation, • digital transformation, • accessibility, • human resource empowerment <p>Since September 2023 when the Initiative was submitted at the UN SDG Summit as a Voluntary Commitment of the Greek Government, the Hellenic Ministry of Energy has achieved progress by:</p>	

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- incorporating further in the islands' selection criteria, parameters related to the **environmental challenges directly linked to climate change** as well as to the **socioeconomic threats** faced by each island,
- **pre-selecting around 40 Greek islands** so far to participate in the Initiative and implement targeted sponsored interventions in the above focus areas,
- **developing and enriching the reference framework** that analyses the interventions to be pursued in each participating Island, i.e. (i) the **GR-eco Island Charter**, which describes what an island must achieve (aim, criteria, levels/categories, standards, procedures, monitoring, GR-eco Island Candidate Status, marketing of the GR-Eco Islands Label) in order to be awarded the GR-eco Island Label; (ii) the **GR-eco Island Master Plan** which focuses on documenting the needs of each one of the pre-selected Islands and the assessment of the appropriate actions and types of projects; as well as (iii) the **GR-eco Island Action Plan** which sets out the implementation plan of the investment programme and the associated organisational measures in order to achieve the GR-eco Island certification.
- **conceptualizing and securing funding for the next GR-eco Island project** to be implemented on the island of **Poros**, under the "sponsorship" mechanism established for this purpose through the National Climate Law. More specifically, the Greek Government in co-operation with UAE based green energy company MASDAR have committed to transform Poros Island into a sustainable island, as part of GR-eco Islands Initiative. Funding from MASDAR will cover four green pillars/interventions, and specifically: the installation of a PV system with battery energy storage, the electrification of road transport, the electrification of the maritime transport as well as waste management through a comprehensive "Zero Waste" model.
- **establishing the "Decarbonization Fund for the Greek Islands"**, through a tri-partite agreement between Greece, the European Commission and the European Investment Bank. Through this Fund, Greece has been granted the right to claim 25 million CO2 emission allowances available for auction, under the EU emissions trading system, that will be used for the co-financing of the decarbonization of the energy systems of the Greek Islands. The budget of this new Fund sums up to at least EUR 1.6 billion, while the Fund is estimated to mobilize overall investments of at least EUR 3.8 billion for the period 2025-2032. The Fund concerns three pillars of various project components, that are currently under preparation, more specifically: the development of RES and energy storage systems, including the construction of dams and reservoirs on the islands, the electrical interconnection of the islands as well as cold ironing facilities on ports and charging stations for EVs.

**Please add a separate update for each commitment made. You can add more rows manually, or by clicking on the plus (+) sign that appears on the bottom-right, when the table is selected.*

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